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Grafton Town House Oversight Committee

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Grafton Municipal Center, Finance Committee Room

February 25, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Committee Members in Attendance: Mark Carlson, Linda Casey, John Morgan, Paul Scarlett

1. Call to Order

- ◆ Meeting was called to order by Mr. Scarlett at 7:03

2. Committee Business

- ◆ Welcome to our newest committee member – Mark Carlson
- ◆ Acceptance of minutes from the following meeting:
 - December 10, 2012 – Ms. Casey motioned to accept the minutes, Mr. Morgan seconded and the vote passed unanimously.

3. Old Business

- ◆ Accessibility Project
 - Update from Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects – Mike Gorman reviewed the designs associated with the two main alternative approaches for completing the balance of restoration work at the Town House. These were labeled Scheme B and C (Scheme A is for the external LU/LA, which has already been bid and we have pricing for). His review also included various options (labeled 1-6), which can either be added or deleted from Schemes A-C.
 - Most of the meeting focused on the various elements of Scheme C. This approach incorporates a large addition at the back of the building to house a full service elevator and enclosed stairwell to provide access to all four levels of the building.
 - At the basement level the following were noted:
 - ❖ An adjustment was made from a prior version of this addition the committee had reviewed in December. The revision was made in response to concerns raised as to the impact on the former TR Fasteners space now being leased to the Grafton Historical Society (GHS). The adjustment to the plans now allows for retention of the two windows associated with this space (Option 4).
 - ❖ As previously noted by Mr. Gorman, a new fire exit/access door along Worcester Street will be required to meet

current code. Here again, the plans presented tonight have been tweaked in order to avoid infiltration into tenant space currently leased to the GHS that is located immediately adjacent to where this door is indicated to be installed. It was further noted that this new access door will necessitate some excavation work in order to accommodate a stairwell down to the door based on the elevations of the lot in this area. This will require some reconfiguring of the drainage line that runs along this side of the building, and a railing around the stairwell would be required at ground level.

- ❖ It was also noted that as with the prior designs reviewed by this committee, the rear entrance to the building that currently provides access to the former TR Fasteners space would become public's rear entrance to the building. This entails a loss of ~81 square feet of space within this suite.
 - ❖ The current public access door at the basement level would be removed (replaced by the one that currently accesses the former TR Fasteners space). The current back hall would be incorporated into the adjacent space currently leased by the GHS.
 - ❖ Finally, it was noted that the original bathroom located adjacent to the main stairwell would need to be removed in order to meet current fire/building code. Mr. Gorman further pointed out that this was the case with whichever Scheme is ultimately settled on
- On the first floor, the side hallway at the center of the building was shown to have been adjusted be at the same level as the main hallway. To accomplish this will entail adding steps down into the suites currently leased to Gilmore Builders and Suburban Staffing. It was further noted that the hallway in this area will require being pushed back a couple of feet in order to accommodate fire stopping/proofing of the central staircase. This will entail some loss of space in the Suite currently leased to Gilmore Builders. The exact square footage of this reduction needs to be clarified.
 - On the second floor, handicap bathrooms and adjustments to create classroom and office space, as well as the restoration of the Great Hall to support a 150-seat theater were depicted. Although not included in the drawings, Mr. Gorman advised that a kitchenette will also be incorporated into one of the classrooms behind the Great Hall.
 - On the third floor, the plans depict the addition of more classrooms as well as a sound/projection control booth and a

small balcony area for spotlights, videography, etc. The floors at this level are also shown to be brought to a consistent level.

- Time was also spent discussing Option 1, which was indicated by Apple Tree Arts to be an absolute necessity for the Great Hall to operate as a performance venue. This option involves an addition above the vault to provide for a backstage area and dressing rooms, as well as a stairwell to provide 3 levels of access/egress to/from the building.
 - Concern was raised by Mr. Scarlett as to the anticipated cost associated with Scheme C. He suggested the plans associated with Scheme B if combined with Option 1 and slightly revised to allow for direct Great Hall access to the enclosed stairwell associated with Option 1 could allow the project to be done at a savings of ~\$800K to ~\$1.2M over Scheme C. Mr. Scarlett indicated this could be accomplished since this approach would allow for the elimination of the separate addition shown under Scheme C by instead leveraging existing variances for handicap accessibility to the third floor and utilization of the existing fire escape servicing this level. Concern with Scheme B was raised by representatives from the GHS due to the plans showing the need to reconfigure one of the bathrooms in the basement with a resulting impact to their space (loss of some space). After some discussion relative to the pluses and minuses of this proposal, the committee directed Mr. Gorman to further review this approach in order to verify its feasibility and to report back to the committee at its next meeting on 3/11/13.
 - It was determined that the committee needed time to review the designs provided by Mr. Gorman and that further discussion should be tabled until the committee's next meeting on 3/11/13.
- ◆ Tenant Issues
- Gas/Electrical Systems Mapping - Grafton Building Inspector Bob Berger advised the committee that work to map out the gas service to all tenant spaces has been completed and that within the next week or so the work needed to do the same for the building's electrical service will begin. This is being done to support separate billing to the tenants rather than allocating these costs based on square footage. Mr. Berger advised there will be as little inconvenience to tenants as possible during this process and that all tenants will be contacted prior to commencement of this work.
 - Vault Work – Ms. Casey advised that bids closed today and she will be able to update the committee at our next meeting. Bids were for the same work but to bid out the equipment separately in order to ascertain the actual cost for the construction work.
 - Custodial Maintenance/Snow Removal – Input provided indicates both custodial and snow removal services are meeting tenant needs.
 - Recycling Totes – Ms. Casey advised these are now in place but an issue exists in that some tenants are not breaking down the boxes they are placing in the totes. Mr. Scarlett will request a reminder be sent to all tenants.

- Venting/Ductwork – The Town Administrator’s office has indicated they are holding off on this work until the HVAC work associated with the building’s restoration is completed. Input will be obtained from Mr. Gorman as to whether this approach makes sense based on work to be done or if it would still be appropriate to clean the ductwork now.
- Parking Lot Damage From Unitarian Church Painting Project – Paint contractor (PJ Heffernan) was contacted by the town last summer but repairs were never made. Need to follow up with the Town Administrator’s office to ensure these repairs are completed this spring.
- ♦ Common Improvements Project – Mr. Morgan advised that the Historic District Commission met with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) earlier in February and that plans to address roadway improvements in front of 2 Grafton Common that were set to be implemented in the Fall of 2011 are once again being reviewed by the BOS. This decision followed a presentation provided by Graves Engineering regarding various approaches to addressing overall pedestrian and traffic safety issues within the Common. These plans would be incorporated into a Master Plan for addressing these issues for the entire Common. Due to the significant scope of this Master Plan as well as the sensitivities involved with any work to be done that would alter aspects of this historic section of town, it was acknowledged that it such a project could not be accomplished without much community input and planning. Also, given the current litany of other projects that need to be addressed within the town, funding mechanism will need to be explored. The consensus of the BOS was that it made sense to first address the area in front of 2 Grafton Common, particularly as money was already set aside for this work at the fall 2011 town meeting. Further discussion with the BOS on both this and the larger initiative are slated to be discussed further in the near future.
- ♦ Design Schematics/Construction Ready Specs for Remaining Exterior Renovations Status – Still on hold at this time. It was noted that funds are set to sunset in May of 2013 and thus an extension will need to be requested at the May Town Meeting.

4. New Business

- ♦ Ms. Casey raised concern over the deterioration of the bricks within her basement level suites and in the rear hall at the basement level. She will be discussing with the Town Administrator’s office the possibility of having a sealant applied arrest this deterioration.

5. Adjournment

- ♦ Mr. Carlson motioned to adjourn at 9:10, Mr. Morgan seconded and the vote passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Paul A. Scarlett, Clerk

